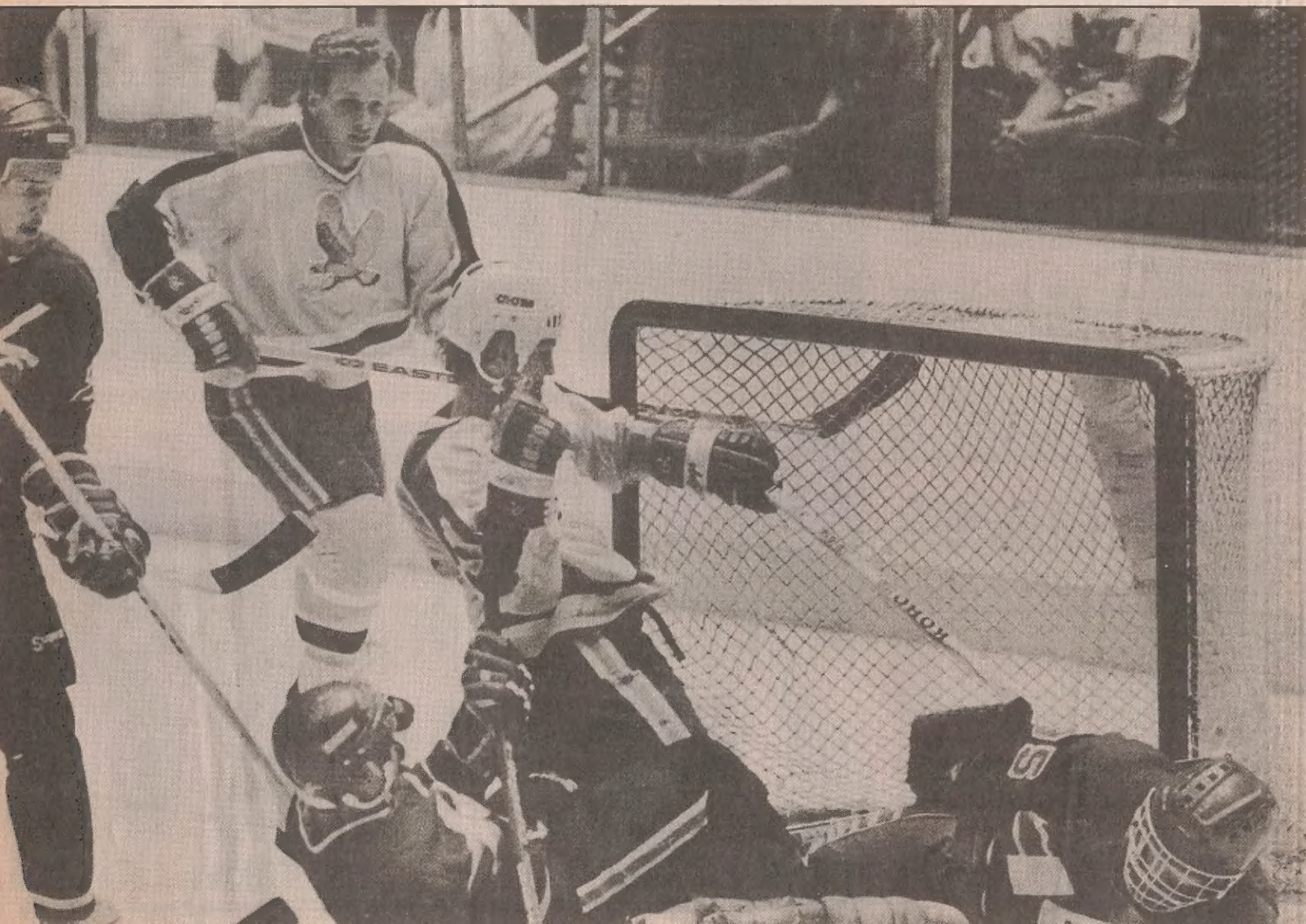


Sports

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New road marker focuses on old view

Recognizes historic trek of valley's 1st white men

5-6-87

SPANISH FORK — At the mouth of Spanish Fork Canyon, travelers can stop to look at the site where white men first gazed upon Utah Valley.

A monument recently unveiled at the Oak Crest Inn, 2600 Canyon Road, points out the hill that Fathers Dominguez and Escalante climbed Sept. 23, 1776, to view the valley and Utah Lake.

"From there they looked upon the most beautiful valley in all of new Spain. To them it was paradise," said Monsignor Jerome Stoffel, historian and archivist of the Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City.

Stoffel said that when the fathers and their party of 10 left Santa Fe, N.M., on July 29, 1776, to find a new route to Monterey, Calif., they had Utah Lake in mind as their primary destination.

The roadside marker, dedicated last week, completes efforts by the Utah County Knights of Columbus to recognize the historic trek Franciscan padres accomplished 211 years ago.

After traveling nearly 1,000 miles the party reached the mouth of the canyon in late September 1776. They climbed a hill and caught sight of the lake and spreading valley rimmed by Indian villages.

The knoll was dedicated Dominguez Hill on Sept. 23, 1976, in a bicentennial celebration. A 37-foot-high steel cross was erected atop it in 1981 and can be seen by looking southwest through the new roadside viewer.

"That hill represents their primary objective," Stoffel said. They could see a place where the Indians lived with relative security, and they were not just nomads."

The priests planned to introduce the Indians to Christianity, but the area was later closed off and the padres could not return with their message, Stoffel said.

The Rev. Louis Vitale of the Franciscan Order, Oakland, Calif., said the monument commemorates the adventurous men who made the earliest recorded trip into Utah Valley by white men.

"These were gentle men who believed in working with the people. They wanted to be a source for caring, a voice for justice and a voice for peace," Vitale said.

The Rev. Flavio Trettel, pastor of the St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Provo, dedicated the monument in a ceremony held as part of the 80th annual Utah Knights of Columbus convention.



PHOTOGRAPHY/ GARY McKELLAR

Emily Thomas, 8, uses a roadside spotter to see the cross on the Dominguez Hill.



Knights of Columbus members stand by the monument that commemorates the trek.